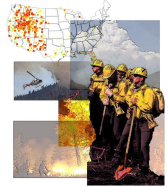


National Fire Plan

Winter 2004 Newsletter

USDA Forest Service, Department of the Interior



National Fire Plan Newsletter

In the spirit of keeping Forest Service staff and partners abreast of the latest NFP news from the Washington Office, this newsletter was designed to highlight some of the hot topics in the NFP. For more on the National Fire Plan, check out www.fireplan.gov.

Wildland Fire Leadership Council

The Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) held its fall meeting in Pinetop, Arizona, at the Hon-Dah Resort. Hosted by the White Mountain Apache Tribe, the 2-day meeting featured a field tour of the 2002 Rodeo-Chediski fire.

Key topics covered at the WFLC business meeting included large fire cost containment, National Fire Plan monitoring, and LANDFIRE. A complete summary of the WFLC fall meeting decision and action items can be found on the WFLC website, which can be accessed through www.fireplan.gov.



Cost Containment Actions

In 2003, Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Review Teams were delegated to review the costs associated with the management of five large fire incidents and complexes. At their October 16, 2003 meeting in Arizona, the WFLC reviewed the primary recommendations of the teams, and requested that the Department of the Interior's Office of Wildland Fire Coordination (OWFC) and USDA Forest Service's National Fire Plan (NFP)

Coordinators oversee the development and operation of a Strategic Issues Panel to address wildland fire suppression costs and their funding mechanisms. At this time, the panel of federal, state, and NGO panel members is being convened; the target completion date for the panel review is May, 2004.

Upcoming NFP/ IAFC/IAWF Meeting

The 2004 NFP Annual Meeting will be held jointly with the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the International Association of Wildland Fire, March 3-5, 2004 in Reno, NV. The theme for the meeting, *Surviving the Interface Danger Zone*, will bring together fire service leaders to address the increasing challenges of wildland fire at the wildland/urban interface. Key topics include federal grants, the restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems, wildland/urban interface community issues, emergency response, and risk analysis. The meeting will also host several general session speakers (TBD), a poster session, and more than 40,000 square feet of exhibit space. For registration and other meeting information, go to www.fireplan.gov.

Performance Report

The FY 2003 National Fire Plan performance report is well on its way to being completed by February. This year's performance report covers FY 2003 accomplishments across all five Fire Plan key points and displays the funding, projects, and accomplishments that were completed across the country by the five federal land management agencies. Thanks to our field and WO staffs for your timely contributions!

Success Story

Fire management investments don't often pay immediate returns, but they did this year in southwestern New Mexico. On May 8 a blaze erupted near Pinos Altos, New Mexico. As night approached, work by BLM and other firefighters and an airtanker had minimal effect on the 5-acre blaze. The fire was rapidly moving to the southwest, toward several communication towers.

However, when the fire reached a 50-acre fuels break created only months before, the show was over. Minor clean up the next day was all that was required. Credit goes to the BLM-Las Cruces field office, which joined the Forest Service, New Mexico State Forestry and others in clearing small diameter ponderosa pine, piñon pine and juniper around the small community at the southern tip of the Gila National Forest.

The project cleared about 150 acres last year. Additional fuels reduction of about 70 acres is currently under way, and work on about 800 more acres is planned.

"Sometimes relatively small, strategic acts bring big results," said Amy Lueders, BLM-Las Cruces field office manager.

NFPORS

NFPORS became fully operational in FY 2003. Information in the data set has been indispensable when answering the wide array of questions asked of the NFP that previously required multiple requests for information from field units. NFPORS data has helped to inform agency and interdepartmental reports, Congressional and Administration briefings, and communications to the general public.

An Interdepartmental User Group has been formed to review NFPORS and to provide direction to the project principal coordinators on how to maintain and strengthen the program. The initial tasks agreed to by the group include database training through a variety of forums and development of the products to be presented on the Management Dashboard.

The National Fire Plan Website

The National Fire Plan website is in the beginning stages of being completely overhauled to better meet the needs of NFP partners and stakeholders. Priorities for the new web design will be user-friendliness, accessibility, more dynamic content (including a greater emphasis on frequently asked questions and training/resource opportunities), and a better overall look. Planning sessions are in the works, and the initial re-design should be out in a few months. Just a heads up: we will be looking for any feedback or suggestions you may have of the new site once it is released!



Healthy Forests Restoration Act

After months of hard work and compromises, both the House and Senate agreed to the report for the Healthy Forests Restoration Act on November 21, sending the bill to the President's desk for his signature. The House- and Senate-approved conference report features \$760M authorization for fuels reduction projects, half of which must be spent at the WUI. Other key provisions in the Act include the maintenance of old-growth stands and a focus on small-diameter trees, thinning, strategic fuel breaks and prescribed fire to modify fire behavior.



FY 2004 Appropriations

The Department of the Interior and Related Agencies FY 2004 Appropriations Act, approved by the House on October 30, 2003 and the Senate on November 3, 2003, was signed into law on November 10, 2003.

	FY 2003 Enacted to Date	FY 2004 President's Budget	Final FY 2004 Conference Action
<u>DISCRETIONARY APPROPRIATIONS</u>			
Wildland Fire Management			
Preparedness	\$611,997	\$609,747	\$675,607
Fire Operations	\$417,964	\$604,580	\$600,674
Repayments for Advances--Interior & Related Agencies	\$636,000	\$0	\$299,056
Subtotal--Regular Wildland Fire Management	\$1,665,961	\$1,214,327	\$1,575,337
Other Operations			
Hazardous Fuels	\$226,626	\$231,392	\$234,865
Fire Facilities Backlog	\$1,838	\$0	\$0
Rehabilitation and Restoration	\$7,078	\$0	\$6,955
Fire Research and Development	\$21,288	\$21,427	\$22,156
Joint Fire Sciences Program	\$7,948	\$8,000	\$7,948
State and Private Forestry			
Forest Health Management--Federal Lands	\$6,910	\$6,955	\$14,903
Forest Health Management--Cooperative Lands	\$9,914	\$4,979	\$9,935
Economic Action Programs	\$4,967	\$0	\$0
State Fire Assistance	\$46,252	\$46,455	\$51,366
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$8,186	\$8,240	\$8,187
Subtotal--Other Operations	\$341,007	\$327,448	\$356,315
Total--Wildland Fire Management	\$2,006,968	\$1,541,775	\$1,931,652